

# VETERANS'

Spring 2006

# Wellness

**Keep your  
mind sharp**

**Maintaining  
good oral  
health**

**Pre-diabetes:  
Take this warning  
to heart**

**The link between  
cholesterol  
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life in the  
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## Thanks for writing!

We'd like to thank all the veterans who write us with comments, questions and suggestions for articles. In the future, we hope to highlight your letters in *Veterans' Wellness*.

## About our mailing list

We make every effort to maintain an accurate mailing list. If you have any questions about the mailing list or would like to be added or deleted, please write to Editor, *Veterans' Wellness*, Network 2 Communications, 465 Westfall Road, Rochester, NY 14620, or e-mail [Kathleen.Hider@med.va.gov](mailto:Kathleen.Hider@med.va.gov).

Please be sure to include your phone number with all correspondence.

# Introducing our new acting network director

## A message from Michael S. Finegan



Michael S. Finegan,  
Acting Network  
Director

I'm pleased to be appointed acting network director of VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York and look forward to serving you. Serving America's heroes is the high point of my professional career. My goal is to ensure that veterans living in upstate New York continue to have access to high-quality health care. I look forward to providing you with quarterly updates on our efforts to meet this goal.

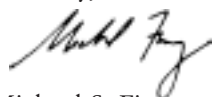
I've had the privilege of serving veterans for many years. Since 2003, I've been director, VA Western New York Healthcare System, which includes the Buffalo and Batavia

VA campuses and seven community-based outpatient clinics. From 2000 to 2003, I served as director at the Butler VA Medical Center in Pennsylvania.

I'm committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle among our veterans. I encourage you to partner with your VA health care provider to ensure you get the very best outcomes. Following and fulfilling your preventive health and wellness guidelines, scheduling regular checkups, requesting patient education materials and asking your VA health care provider questions are steps you can take toward improving your health.

Again, I look forward to serving you.

Sincerely,



Michael S. Finegan  
Acting Network Director

## A fond farewell

William F. Feeley, network director since March 2003, has been appointed Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Feeley will oversee operations and management within the Veterans Health Administration, the largest integrated health care system in the country.

During his 30 years of federal service, Mr. Feeley's achievements have included the 2005 Presidential Rank Award, Distinguished Executive; 2003 Presidential Rank Award, Meritorious Executive; and the 2000 Office of Performance Management Director's PILLAR (Performance, Incentives, and Leadership: Linked to Achieve Results) Award.

He developed a customer service program that solicits feedback from veterans and their families about VA care and makes improvements to exceed their expectations. The customer service program won the 1999 VA's Under Secretary for Health's Innovation Award and received national acclaim.

*We wish Mr. Feeley well in his new and expanded role in serving America's veterans.*



William F. Feeley,  
Deputy Under  
Secretary for Health  
for Operations and  
Management for  
Department of  
Veterans Affairs





# Maintaining good oral health

**I**n your quest for total wellness, don't overlook dental hygiene. Research shows that people with periodontal disease, also called gum disease, have a greater risk for heart disease than those with healthy gums. Some doctors say dental inflammation causes increased plaque buildup in the arteries, while others think oral bacteria affect the heart when they enter the bloodstream.

"Oral care is closely tied to the physical well-being of all our veterans," says Norman W. Bartz, Jr., D.D.S., chief of dental services for VA Western New York Healthcare System. "It impacts their social presence and plays a significant role in preventing medical complications associated with disorders like diabetes and certain heart conditions."

## Steps you can take

These basic steps will protect your teeth and gums and keep you smiling for years to come:

- **Brush at least twice a day.** Many people don't brush for a long enough period of time. To make sure you do, turn on the radio and brush for the duration of one song. Clean the surfaces of all your teeth. And make it a point to brush at bedtime.
- **Floss at least once a day.** Flossing helps remove plaque that can lead

to cavities and gum disease from hard-to-reach surfaces near the gumline.

- **Choose a toothbrush** with three or four rows of soft, rounded bristles and replace every three months.
- **Be aware of gum disease signs.** Redness, swelling or bleeding are early signs of gingivitis, or gum inflammation. If not treated, gingivitis can destroy the periodontal tissues that support the teeth. Severe gum disease usually leads to tooth loss.
- **Avoid sweets.** The bacteria that live in your mouth use sugar to produce acids that destroy tooth enamel.
- **See your dentist** once a year for a checkup and have your teeth professionally cleaned every six months.

"Oral cancer screenings save thousands of lives each year and prevent needless suffering through early cancer detection," says Dr. Bartz. VA dental service provides dental care to **eligible** veterans, which is based on specific guidelines. If your eligibility does not include dental services we encourage you to use these tips and work with your own dentist to optimize your dental health. If you have questions about dental eligibility, call the Veterans Service Center at (888) 823-9656. ■

## Don't be afraid of the dentist

**M**any of us feel anxious when visiting the dentist. In fact, 30 million to 40 million Americans avoid seeing the dentist because of fear, according to an article reviewed by the faculty of Columbia University's School of Dental & Oral Surgery.

Judy Romano, department chair of the dental hygiene program at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, N.Y., says fear of the dentist is common among all ages, especially those in middle age or older who may have had past traumatic dental experiences. Patients commonly fear pain.

"The good news is that better pain control, better atmosphere and greater attention to people's phobias in the office are addressing many patient concerns," says Romano. As a result, today's children are having better experiences at the dentist's office. Some dental offices are using music, TVs and pleasing scents, like coffee, to create a more relaxed atmosphere. There's even a growing business in spa dentistry!

"Communication skills are important to make patients aware about what's going to happen to them," she says. Dentists are more aware of dental phobia now than in the past and try to address fears in a positive way. Speak to your dental provider about any concerns you may have.



For more information about good oral care, log on to [MyHealthVet at](http://MyHealthVet.at) [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).



# Pre-diabetes: Take this



**Y**ou've no doubt heard about the dangers of type 2 diabetes—an increased risk of heart disease, kidney failure, blindness and other complications. Now comes another warning: Pre-diabetes, a condition in which your blood glucose (blood sugar) levels are higher than normal, usually precedes the development of type 2 diabetes and increases your risk for developing other diseases. The good news: Unlike full-blown diabetes, pre-diabetes is reversible. By maintaining a healthy lifestyle, you can keep diabetes and the toll it can take on your body at bay.

## Are you at risk?

An estimated 41 million people have pre-diabetes though many are unaware they have the condition since it usually has no symptoms. But damage to your heart and circulatory system may already be under way. If you're overweight and over age 45, you may be at risk, so ask your VA health care provider about a pre-diabetes screening. If you're overweight but younger than 45, your provider may advise testing if you have any of these diabetes risk factors:

- a family history
- high blood pressure
- low HDL (good) cholesterol and high triglycerides
- a history of gestational diabetes or giving birth to a baby weighing

## Answering the wakeup call

**W**hen Arthur Spada, a 75-year-old veteran who resides in Clifton Park, was diagnosed with pre-diabetes several years ago, he decided to look at the early warning sign as a positive message to make healthy lifestyle changes, rather than resign himself to living with a serious health threat. Until his diagnosis, Spada had no clue he was suffering from a condition that put him at high risk for diabetes and heart disease.

It was during his annual physical exam at the Albany VA Medical Center that Spada's doctor, Nazir Memon, M.D., noticed his blood sugars were high, a sign of pre-diabetes. When Dr. Memon told him to change his diet and exercise, Spada knew he had to obey his doctor's orders. Spada can repeat them like a mantra to this day.

"Watch your diet, exercise, quit smoking and keep busy," says Spada, and he continues to practice what he preaches. So far, Spada has lost about five pounds, which he credits to keeping active. He makes it a point to walk as well as climb stairs several times a day. He's cut down on sugar-based and fatty foods, and he quit smoking. An added bonus: These lifestyle changes have given him more energy, he says, and his attitude has become more "get up and go."

He still has an optimistic attitude about his modified lifestyle to keep diabetes at bay and puts a positive spin on his health: "Pre-diabetes isn't an ailment that makes you feel sick all of the time. The world isn't going to end if you have pre-diabetes. Life goes on."

Spada is a good example of someone who has benefited from a routine exam—and why scheduling an annual physical is so important, even if you're feeling well. Spada proves how heeding a simple warning about a potentially life-threatening condition can result in a positive outcome.



Arthur Spada,  
of Clifton Park



# warning to heart

more than 9 pounds

- being of African-American, Hispanic, Latino, Native American or Asian/Pacific Islander descent

## Preventing pre-diabetes

Excess glucose in your bloodstream damages nerves and blood vessels. In fact, people who have pre-diabetes have a 50 percent higher risk for heart disease or stroke. Fortunately, research shows that people at risk for diabetes can prevent or delay its onset by losing as little as 5 percent to 7 percent of their body weight—that's about 10 to 14 pounds for someone who weighs 200 pounds. Exercise and healthy food choices can help you control your weight.

Eat modest portions of nutritious food throughout the day rather than one or two larger meals. Besides ensuring that excessive hunger won't lead to overeating, it will also help keep blood sugar levels consistent. Follow a diet that's high in fiber and low in sugars, starches and saturated fats. Balanced meals should include fresh produce, whole grains like brown rice and whole-wheat breads and cereals, and healthy proteins such as low-fat milk and lean cuts of meat.

Get plenty of exercise—at least 30 minutes a day. Aerobic exercise like brisk walking, biking, swimming and running on a treadmill will help reduce your risk of pre-diabetes. ■

For more information about pre-diabetes, log on to My Health@Vet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).



## Find fitness in everyday chores

Here's some good news for the millions of Americans who have diabetes and those at risk for developing the disease: Doctors say exercising regularly and losing just a few pounds of excess weight can dramatically improve your health.

Just 30 minutes of daily physical activity—aerobic exercise for the heart and lungs and modest weight training to strengthen muscles—is all that's required to help you control your glucose or blood sugar levels. In addition to strengthening your bones, heart and other muscles, working out will lower stress and improve your mood, self-image and sleep. Try these tips to find the fitness in your daily to-do list:

- **Make cleaning count.** The stretching and physical work involved in housework can get you moving. Wear sneakers, play music and pick up the pace.
- **Wash the car.** This can be a refreshing chore on a warm day.
- **Mow the lawn with a push mower.** Sorry, ride-on mowers don't count.
- **Do yard work and gardening.** Raking, hoeing, pruning and digging are great exercises to strengthen your arms, legs and back. A vigorous hour of yard work can burn up to 300 calories.
- **Walk the dog.** Share a walk twice a day with your furry friend. Choose a hilly route and keep a brisk pace.
- **Work out while watching TV.** Pedal a stationary bike, walk on a treadmill, lift weights or use other home fitness equipment while you watch TV.
- **Paint it pretty.** Don't hire painters; get a good workout and save money by taking on home repairs and improvement projects yourself.
- **Walk the talk.** Get up and move around while talking on the phone. Even better, grab your cell and walk around the block as you chat.
- **Run errands on foot and pedal power.** If you live far from your town's main strip, drive to a central location and head out on foot or bike to swing by the bank, return library books and pick up groceries.

# The link between

**Y**ou probably think cholesterol is bad for you, right? Well, that depends on which kind of cholesterol you're talking about. The kind you eat, *dietary* cholesterol, is found in animal products. The kind the doctor tests is *blood* cholesterol. However, fat, especially saturated fat—not dietary cholesterol—mainly determines how high your blood cholesterol counts will be.

So, can you eat as much dietary cholesterol as you want? Not really. Keep reading to find out more.

**How much cholesterol do I need to eat?** You don't need to eat any cholesterol even though it's essential to many bodily functions. Your body makes all it needs. Experts recommend that someone with a 2,000-calorie diet eat less than 300 milligrams of cholesterol a day—the equivalent of one whole egg and 3½ ounces of drained, oil-packed tuna—and less than 65 grams of fat. Your cholesterol and fat intake figures will change depending on your health care provider's recommendations, your caloric intake and your risk of heart disease.

**I've heard about "good" cholesterol. What is it?** Although good cholesterol, called HDL cholesterol, exists, you can't eat it. Your body makes it. HDL carries "bad," or LDL, cholesterol out of the body. The more fat you eat, the

For more information about cholesterol and food, log on to My Health@Vet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).





# cholesterol and food

more LDLs are made. If you make more LDLs than the HDLs can carry out, your arteries may be more prone to blockage.

**What are the three major types of fat? Monounsaturated fats** are your best choice. These fats may help reduce blood cholesterol.

Sources include olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, nuts and avocados.

**Polyunsaturated fats** may also help lower blood cholesterol. Sources include vegetable oils such as corn, sesame and sunflower oil. **Saturated fats** can raise the blood cholesterol level and should, therefore, be limited to 8 percent to 10 percent of your diet. Sources include meat, poultry with skin, butter and whole-milk dairy products.

**What are trans fats?** Trans fatty

acids are made when hydrogen is added to vegetable oil. The process, called hydrogenation, turns liquid fat into solid fat that maintains its shelf life for much longer than non-hydrogenated fat. Trans fats are found in foods like margarine, cookies and fried foods.

**What's worse for my cholesterol ... scrambled eggs or a muffin?**

A muffin! While eggs have a lot of dietary cholesterol (one egg has two-thirds the recommended daily amount), they are low in fat and calories and contain protein and vitamin A. Muffins are high in fat and have little nutritional benefit.

The American Heart Association recommends that healthy people limit themselves to three eggs a

week. That includes eggs in baked items like cakes and muffins. Egg whites are unlimited.

**What about shrimp and other shellfish?** Since shellfish is very low in fat, particularly saturated fat, it's no more likely to raise blood cholesterol than lean meat.

**Does my family history of cholesterol problems affect me?**

Yes. Even if your own levels are low, you have to keep an eye on your diet. You should also get your cholesterol levels checked more often than once every three to five years, the schedule for patients at low risk. You can also help keep your numbers in the normal range by quitting smoking, maintaining a healthy weight and controlling high blood pressure. ■

## Crispy oven-fried chicken

This heart-healthy alternative to traditional fried chicken is spicy and easy to make. The ginger is a pleasant surprise for your taste buds.

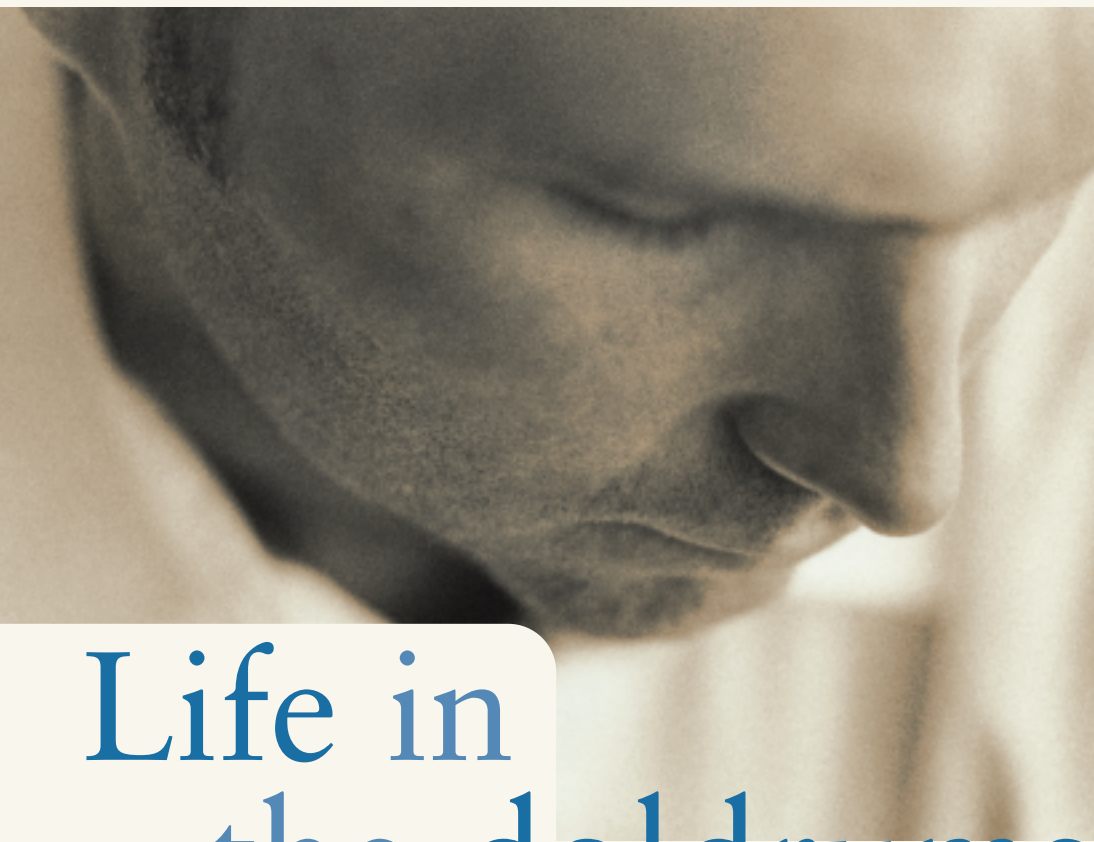
- Vegetable oil spray, butter-flavored or original
- 1½ cups wheat-flake or corn-flake cereal, lightly crushed (1 to 1.5 oz.)
- ½ clove garlic, crushed, or ¼ tsp. bottled minced garlic (optional)
- ⅓ tsp. ground ginger, or to taste
- ⅓ tsp. paprika
- Pinch of salt (optional)
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 4 pieces chicken (about 1 lb.), skinned, all visible fat removed

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Spray a baking sheet with vegetable oil spray. Set aside.
2. Place cereal in a pie pan on a piece of foil. Stir in garlic. Set aside.
3. Combine ginger, paprika, salt and pepper in a small bowl.
4. Rinse chicken and pat dry with paper towels. Sprinkle seasonings on both sides of each piece.
5. Roll chicken in cereal crumbs to coat. Spray chicken lightly on all sides with vegetable oil spray. Place on prepared baking sheet.
6. Bake for 45 to 60 minutes, or until chicken is golden-brown and tender. Timing will vary according to the thickness of the chicken pieces.

Serves 2. Per serving: 235 calories, 28 g protein, 15 g carbohydrates, 6 g total fat (2 g saturated fat, 2 g polyunsaturated fat, 2 g monounsaturated fat), 77 mg cholesterol, 206 mg sodium

Adapted from the *American Heart Association's Low-Fat, Low Cholesterol Cookbook*, Second edition  
© 2002 Ballantine Books, a division of Random House, Inc. Available from booksellers everywhere.





# Life in the doldrums

If you're like many others, when you read an article or watch a TV commercial that lists the symptoms of depression—sadness, fatigue, irritability, weight gain or loss and trouble sleeping—you may think those symptoms almost, but not quite, describe how you sometimes feel. After all, you can still go about your usual activities, even though it often seems as if you're just going through the motions. "I'm just stressed, not depressed," you think. Perhaps not.

## Another type of depression

You may suffer from a chronic form of depression called dysthymia. With this mood disorder, sometimes called the com-

mon cold of mental illness, symptoms may not be as severe as depression's, but they can persist for years. You may have had feelings of gloominess, apathy and low energy for so long that they've simply become part of your personality or



'I'm just  
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Perhaps not.

you accept them as a result of difficult life events. Perhaps you also suffer chronic physical ailments such as headaches, backaches or gastrointestinal problems but don't connect these to your mood. Dysthymia can prevent you from functioning well or feeling good and increases your risk for major depression or substance abuse disorder.

Dysthymia may be caused by many factors,

including genetic, psychological and environmental issues. It may result from a serious loss, a difficult relationship or financial problems. Normally, the sadness and other symptoms lift after these events, but when they don't, these feelings may persist for years.

## Getting help

If you think you may suffer from dysthymia, see your VA health care provider. He or she will first rule out other causes of your symptoms such as a viral illness. Treatment depends on the symptoms' severity and may include counseling, problem-solving therapy and antidepressants. Once you begin treatment, try the following strategies to help improve your outlook:

- **Set realistic goals.** Break large projects into smaller, more manageable tasks and set priorities.
- **Socialize.** Reach out to friends and make new ones.
- **Find enjoyable activities.** Go to a movie, attend religious services or begin an exercise program.

Treatments for dysthymia are highly effective, but don't expect to just snap out of it or pull yourself together on your own. And you're not alone—depression affects people in all walks of life, including famous people like Abraham Lincoln, Mark Twain and Georgia O'Keefe. You can lift sadness and live a happier life, but you must seek help. ■

For more information about depression, log on to My HealtheVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).





# Keep thinking!

## Ways to keep your mind in shape

**S**taying active past age 50 doesn't only mean aerobics or power walks. Your brain needs its regular workout to function at tiptop levels, too. So it's in your best interest to keep absorbing new information. Make these mind-over-matter suggestions a part of your fitness regimen:

- **Dare yourself to learn a new skill**, such as taking photographs, playing a musical instrument or speaking another language.
- **Drink like a fish ...** water, that is—eight glasses daily. It's the single most important element in our bodies and it's essential for clear thinking. Eat more nutritiously, too. You'll notice you have more stamina and a better outlook.
- **Use routines** to keep yourself organized and productive. Good places to start: a calendar to keep track of tasks, a to-do list for getting things fixed or done around the house, a diary to record events and ideas.
- **Learn to focus your thoughts** through techniques such as meditation and yoga. These exercises relieve stress to keep you centered on the task at hand.
- **Stay “up”** as time goes by. It may sound trite, but doctors say people who look on the bright side are more alert and aware and live longer than worrywarts. Music can help improve blood flow, breathing and stress.
- **Take advantage of the many ways you can keep your mind sharp.** Do the daily crossword puzzle or try the addictive Sudoku game and other mind acuity puzzles. Take an adult-education course, join a bridge club or just observe a daily ritual like an after-dinner stroll to keep your brain-power peaking.
- **Forgive yourself** the next time you need 15 minutes to find your car keys. As we age, we naturally become slightly forgetful about



mundane items. And though worsening lapses require a doctor's evaluation, so-called short-term memory loss (of events in the past few minutes, hours or days) is perfectly normal. Besides, worrying about it can make it worse.

- **Challenge yourself** any way you like, and you'll stand a better chance of maintaining mental fitness well into your golden years. ■

For more information about exercises for your mind, log on to [MyHealth@Vet](http://MyHealth@Vet) at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).



## Word search

**T**wenty-four words related to health and wellness are buried in the word search at right. See whether you can find them, looking up, down and diagonally in all directions. The answers are on page 10.

ARTERY	FIBER	PULSE
BONES	FITNESS	SLEEP
CALCIUM	HEALTH	SWIM
CARDIO	HEART	VEINS
DIET	JOINTS	VITAMINS
DOCTOR	MEDICINE	WALK
EXERCISE	PELVIS	X-RAY
FAITH	PROTEIN	YOGA

M	T	E	I	D	H	E	E	F	X	W	S	M	A	E
O	E	G	E	E	R	S	C	I	H	Z	N	I	R	O
N	T	D	A	S	I	A	R	T	Z	X	I	W	T	U
W	Q	R	I	C	L	O	Y	N	S	N	E	S	E	L
F	T	E	R	C	T	U	R	E	L	I	V	X	R	E
N	M	E	I	C	I	K	P	S	F	L	V	C	Y	O
S	X	U	O	A	L	N	R	S	H	E	A	L	T	H
E	M	D	X	R	A	Y	E	J	H	E	E	E	E	I
V	I	T	A	M	I	N	S	N	I	E	T	O	R	P
W	X	V	C	M	B	P	O	J	K	F	W	N	E	B
Q	E	T	V	X	O	V	I	X	O	A	A	E	M	Z
T	O	T	W	Q	N	I	D	A	L	I	L	I	W	G
R	E	B	I	F	E	I	R	K	G	S	N	V	T	T
O	A	A	P	F	S	O	A	J	Z	O	B	T	G	H
Q	K	L	K	U	K	B	C	S	L	X	Y	Q	S	H

# VA news

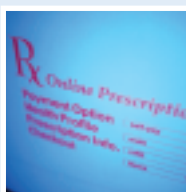
## and updates

### Refill prescriptions available online

Patients registered in My HealthVet can now conveniently order their prescription refills online with the click of a mouse. Prescription refills can be mailed to the patient's home or to their local VA pharmacy.

To use Online Refill, you must be a VA patient with prescriptions written by VA doctors that have already been filled at least once at a VA pharmacy and have a My HealthVet account.

My HealthVet, is an interactive Web site designed to empower veterans to take a more active role in their health care. To register, go to [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) and click on the "Register now" link. In no time, you'll have the best health information and resources at your fingertips and be able to order your prescription refills online.



### Don't be a 'no-show'

Can't make your health care appointment? Be sure to call and let us know as soon as possible. By picking up the phone and canceling your clinic appointment or scheduled test, you're helping another veteran have access to that appointment.

We encourage you to cancel your appointment as soon as you know you can't make it. However, we understand that sometimes there are unforeseen circumstances that result in the need to cancel an appointment outside of normal business hours. For that reason, we're working on improving our phone system to make it easier for you to notify us of last-minute cancellations. In the near future, you'll be able to leave a message after normal business hours to cancel your appointment.

This improvement comes at the suggestion of Rose DeSantis, wife of a veteran and loyal *Veterans' Wellness* reader. If you have an idea to improve our service to you, write to us at *Veterans' Wellness*, Network 2 Communications, 465 Westfall Road, Rochester, NY 14620 or e-mail [Kathleen.Hider@med.va.gov](mailto:Kathleen.Hider@med.va.gov).



### Burial benefits available

The Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration offers free burials for veterans at any of the 122 national VA cemeteries with available space. All veterans are entitled to receive a flag, ceremony and government headstone or marker regardless of where they're buried. To accommodate the growing number of deceased veterans, there are plans to expand several cemeteries, including the Gerald B. H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery. For more information about the Saratoga site, contact the cemetery at (518) 581-9128.

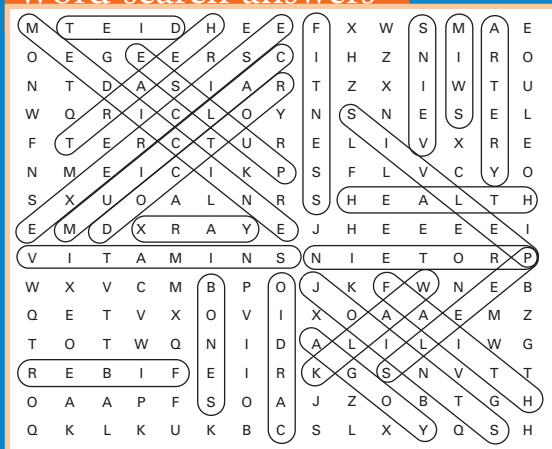
### New insurance program for traumatic injuries

On December 1, 2005, a new insurance program to help service members and veterans through extended periods of medical care and healing became effective. The program's intent is to allow service members or veterans to focus on their recovery and adjustment back to civilian life without financial worries. Benefits are payable retroactively to October 7, 2001, for those who suffered specific traumatic injuries while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom. Payments range from \$25,000 to \$100,000.

Under this new program, benefits are payable for injuries or illnesses that make for a difficult transition back to civilian life. Examples include loss of limb, severe third-degree burns, paralysis, blindness and severe brain injuries. For a complete list and for eligibility questions, visit [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov). You can also call the Office of Service Members' Group Life Insurance at (800) 419-1473.

To be eligible for the Traumatic Service Members' Group Life Insurance (TSGLI), the service member would have to be enrolled in Service Members' Group Life Insurance (SGLI). Every member with SGLI also has TSGLI effective December 1, 2005. VA and Department of Defense are identifying potential recipients.

### Word search answers



For more news and health information, log on to My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).





# free VA Wellness Programs

**V**A Healthcare Network Upstate New York is dedicated to improving the health of our veterans. To help you stay healthy and informed, we are pleased to offer the following wellness programs designed especially for veterans. All programs are free. For more information including dates, times and locations, please call one of the numbers listed below between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

## Stress Management

Individual counseling is available to help you manage your stress. *For more information, call:*

Albany (518) 626-5339  
Bath (607) 664-4331  
Buffalo (716) 862-8595  
Canandaigua (585) 393-7252  
Syracuse (315) 425-3485

## Diabetes Management

This 12-month program helps veterans with diabetes develop self-management tools. The program provides tips on nutrition and exercise and how to reduce your risk of diabetes complications. *For more information, call:*

Albany, contact your primary care provider  
Bath (607) 664-4614 or (607) 664-4626  
Batavia (585) 297-1000, ext. 72555  
Buffalo (716) 862-8844  
Canandaigua (585) 393-7109 or (585) 393-7126  
Syracuse (315) 425-2432

## Understanding Your Medications

Individual counseling is offered for veterans who need help managing medications. *For more information, call:*

Albany (518) 626-5780  
Bath (607) 664-4413, then press 2  
Buffalo (716) 862-8881 or (716) 862-3223  
Canandaigua (585) 393-7122, then press 2  
ROPC (585) 463-2697, then press 2  
Syracuse (315) 425-4400, ext. 52026, then press 2

## Depression and the Elderly

Individual and group counseling is available to help veterans deal with late-life depression. *For more information, call:*

Albany (518) 626-5339  
Bath (607) 664-4301  
Buffalo (716) 862-8595  
Canandaigua (585) 393-7250  
Syracuse (315) 425-3485

## Dementia Care Services

Held quarterly in Albany and monthly in Buffalo, the workshop covers a variety of dementia-related topics of interest to patients and caregivers. *For more information, call:*

Albany (518) 626-6051  
Buffalo (716) 862-3237  
Canandaigua (585) 393-7901

## New Patient Orientation

### Rochester Outpatient Clinic

Learn how VA system works and how to access services. Includes information on pharmacy services, eligibility and mental health services. Can also be attended by existing patients for a refresher. *Held every other Friday afternoon. For dates and times, call Geri Wiess at (585) 463-2747.*

## Ask the expert



### THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

**Betty Perkins-Carpenter, Ph.D.**  
President, Senior Fitness, in Penfield, N.Y., and  
author of *How to Prevent Falls—Better Balance,  
Independence and Energy in Six Simple Steps*

**Q:** As I get older, I lose my balance more frequently. Why is this happening?

**A:** Unfortunately, many factors can contribute to loss of balance, including muscle weakness, limited vision, inner-ear problems, medication side effects, impaired circulation, poor nutrition, poor flexibility (especially ankles) and diabetes and other diseases.

However, you can enhance balance!

**Q:** How can I improve my balance?

**A:** Here's an exercise you can do at home:\* Place your hands on the back of a chair. Lift up your right knee (keep the foot a few inches off the floor). Hold this position for a slow count of five seconds. Lower your knee, relax and repeat with your left leg. Alternate legs. You'll *feel* your balance improve.

**Q:** I get scared when I hear stories about people my age falling and breaking a hip. What can I do if I'm afraid I'll fall?

**A:** It's OK to be scared. Fear is a big bully. But you can meet your fear head-on. Whenever you sit down to watch TV or lie down in bed, practice falling. Relax your body completely and **slowly** slump into a comfortable chair or mattress. This will train your body to be on "automatic pilot." Remember, a stiff body breaks; a limp body bends.

For more tips to improve balance and prevent injury from falls, visit [www.senior-fitness.com](http://www.senior-fitness.com).

For more information about balance, log on to  
**My HealthVet** at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).



**\*Before you begin any exercise program, you should check with your VA health care provider or primary care team.**

**Redeem this coupon for a free cup  
of coffee or soda at the Veterans  
Canteen Service food court located  
at the Albany, Batavia, Bath, Buffalo,  
Canandaigua and Syracuse VA medical  
centers. Offer limited to veteran patients.  
Compliments of Veterans Canteen Services.**

Expires 4-30-06

# Reaching us is easy

[www.va.gov/visns/visn02](http://www.va.gov/visns/visn02)

## VA medical centers

### Albany

113 Holland Avenue  
Albany, NY 12208  
(518) 626-5000

### Batavia

222 Richmond Avenue  
Batavia, NY 14020  
(585) 297-1000

### Bath

76 Veterans Avenue  
Bath, NY 14810  
(607) 664-4000

### Buffalo

3495 Bailey Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14215  
(716) 834-9200

### Canandaigua

400 Fort Hill Avenue  
Canandaigua, NY 14424  
(585) 394-2000

### Syracuse

800 Irving Avenue  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
(315) 425-4400

## Community-based outpatient clinics

### Auburn

Auburn Memorial Hospital  
17 Lansing Street  
Auburn, NY 13021  
(315) 255-7002

### Bainbridge

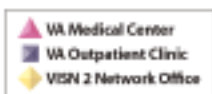
109 North Main Street  
Bainbridge, NY 13733  
(607) 967-8590

### Binghamton

425 Robinson Street  
Binghamton, NY 13901  
(607) 772-9100

### Carthage

3 Bridge Street  
Carthage, NY 13619  
(315) 493-4180



### Catskill

Greene Medical Bldg.  
159 Jefferson Heights  
Catskill, NY 12414  
(518) 943-7515

### Clifton Park

1673 Route 9  
Clifton Park, NY 12065  
(518) 383-8506

### Cortland

1129 Commons Avenue  
Cortland, NY 13045  
(607) 662-1517

### Dunkirk

The Resource Center  
325 Central Avenue  
Dunkirk, NY 14048  
(716) 366-2122

### Elizabethtown

P.O. Box 277  
Park Street  
Elizabethtown, NY 12932  
(518) 873-3295

### Elmira

Health Services Bldg.  
200 Madison Avenue  
Suite 2E  
Elmira, NY 14901  
(877) 845-3247

### Fonda

Camp Mohawk Plaza  
Route 30A  
Fonda, NY 12068  
(518) 853-1247

### Glens Falls

84 Broad Street  
Glens Falls, NY 12801  
(518) 798-6066

### Ithaca

VA Outpatient Clinic  
10 Arrowwood Drive  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
(607) 274-4680

### Jamestown

The Resource Center  
890 East Second Street  
Jamestown, NY 14701  
(716) 661-1447

### Kingston

63 Hurley Avenue  
Kingston, NY 12401  
(845) 331-8322

### Lackawanna

Our Lady of Victory  
Family Care Center  
227 Ridge Road  
Lackawanna, NY 14218  
(716) 822-5944

### Lockport

Ambulatory Care Center  
5875 S. Transit Road  
Lockport, NY 14094  
(716) 433-2025

### Malone

183 Park Street  
Suite 3  
Malone, NY 12953  
(518) 481-2545

### Massena

1 Hospital Drive  
Massena, NY 13662  
(315) 769-4253

### Niagara Falls

VA Outpatient Clinic  
2201 Pine Avenue  
Niagara Falls, NY 14301-2300  
(800) 223-4810

### Olean

465 North Union Street  
Olean, NY 14760-2658  
(716) 373-7709

### Oswego

Seneca Hills Health  
Services Center  
County Route 45A  
Oswego, NY 13126  
(315) 343-0925

### Plattsburgh

43 Durkee Street  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901  
(518) 561-8310

### Rochester

465 Westfall Road  
Rochester, NY 14620  
(585) 463-2600

### Rome

125 Brookley Road  
Bldg. 510  
Rome, NY 13441  
(315) 334-7100

### Schenectady

1322 Gerling Street  
Sheridan Plaza  
Schenectady, NY 12308  
(518) 346-3334

### Troy

Troy Primary Care Practice  
295 River Street  
Troy, NY 12180  
(518) 274-7707

### Warsaw

Wyoming County  
Community Hospital  
400 N. Main Street  
Warsaw, NY 14569  
(585) 344-3355

### Wellsville

Jones Memorial Hospital  
Health Care Center  
13 Loder Street  
Wellsville, NY 14895  
(585) 596-2056

## VETERANS' Wellness

Network 2 Communications  
465 Westfall Road  
Rochester, NY 14620

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